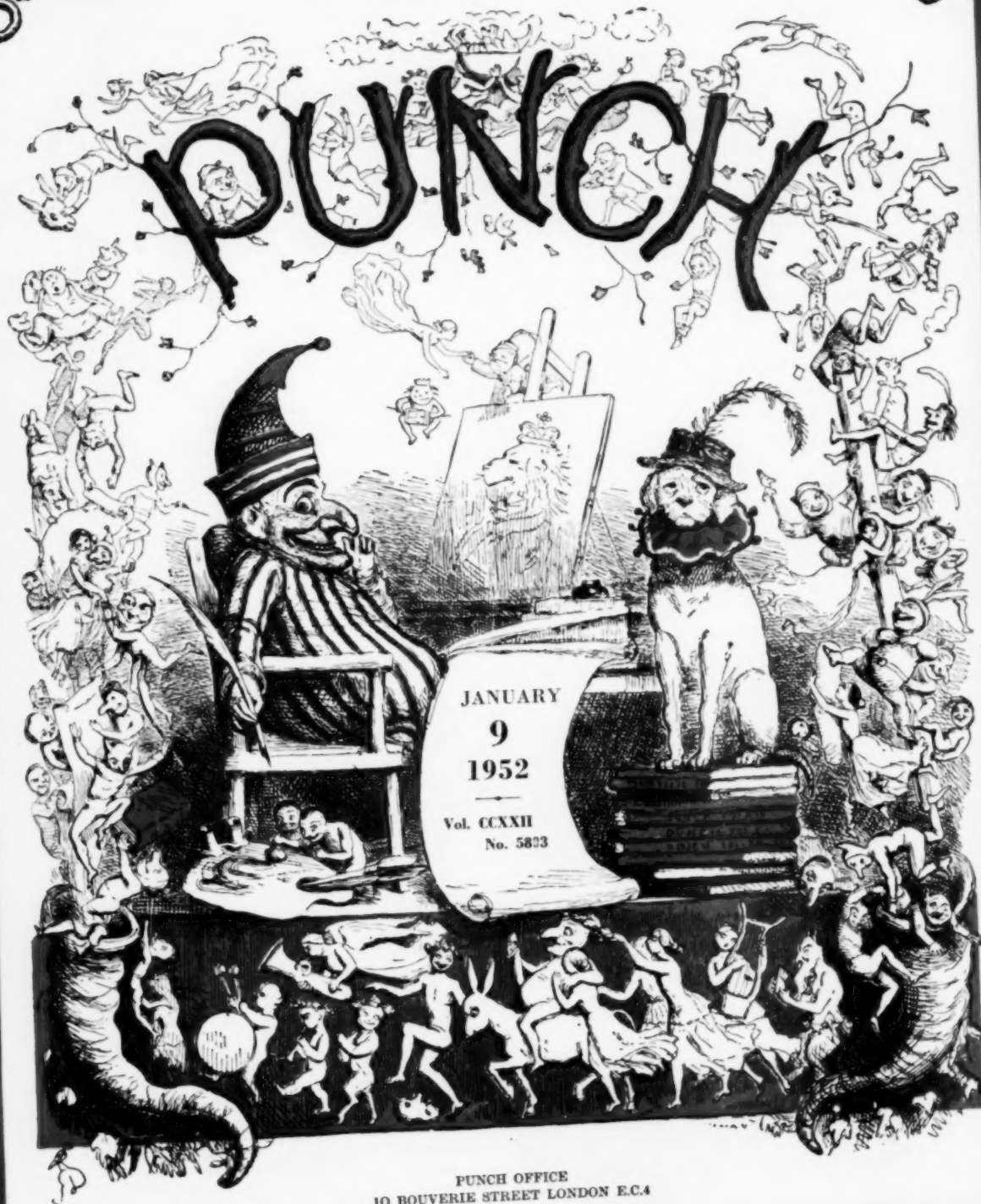


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JANUARY

9

1952

Vol. CCXXII  
No. 5833

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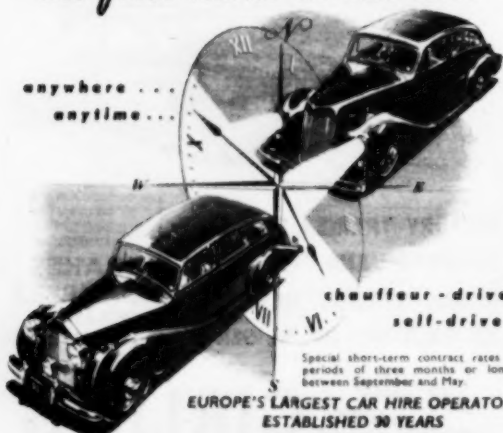
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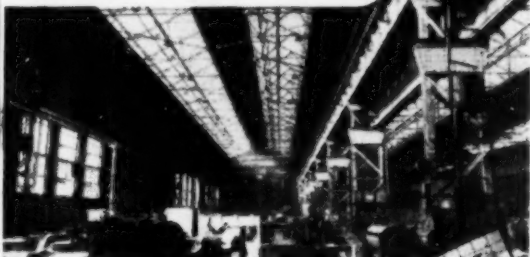
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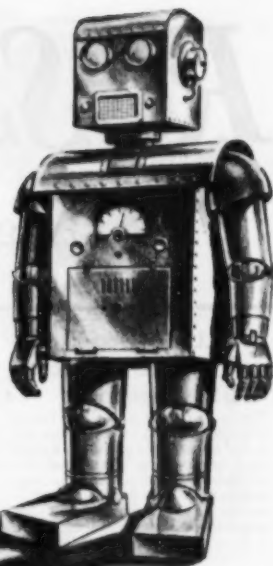
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make  
friends  
with a robot**



SCIENTISTS have invented highly ingenious  
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almost as knowledgeably as Professor Brogan. Neverthe-  
less, most of us would rather have real human beings as  
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It's rather the same with wood. Wood has a *feel* and a  
character all its own. No matter how it is sawn, carved &  
planed, it remains somehow *alive*. You can *make friends*  
with it.

Naturally, architects specify wood for its traditional  
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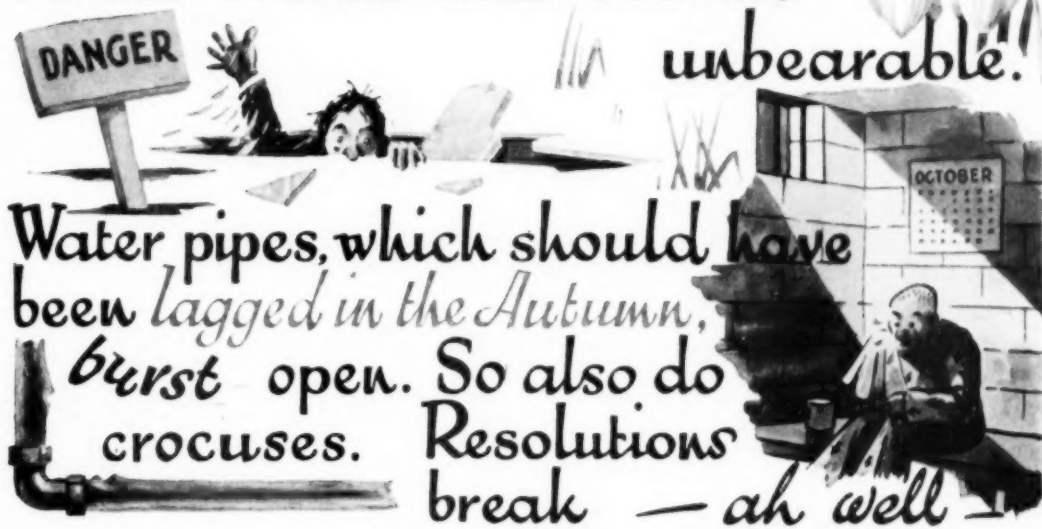
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Ring in the New!  
Snow falls and snowdrops.  
Ponds freeze and become  
unbearable!



Water pipes, which should have  
been lagged in the Autumn,  
burst open. So also do  
crocuses. Resolutions  
break — ah well —

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL —

"have a  
**Capstan**  
— made to make friends —"



JANUARY OPES THE GATES OF LIFE

BROOMHALL, FIFE: Seat of the EARL OF ELGIN AND KINCARDINE



SANDERSON OF BERNERS STREET

take unusual pride in announcing the first showing of the

*Courtaulds-Sanderson  
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NEVER BEFORE, in this country's long experience of producing beautiful things, has such a collection as this been seen. For here are fabrics, rare in their loveliness and unique in their associations, which everyone may handle, admire, compare . . . and buy for their own homes.

From the stately manors and castles of Britain, seats of historic families, experts have chosen the finest of the handwoven hangings and embroidered materials, to bring them to life once more in all

their original splendour of colour and design. Courtaulds are to be congratulated on a magnificent idea, brilliantly carried out, and Sandersons are proud to be associated with them in the undertaking. The Courtaulds-Sanderson Collection of Ancestral Fabrics will be on view at 52-55 Berners Street, London, W 1, from January 15th, 1952. It will also be seen in the U.S.A. and Sweden by arrangement with F. SCHUMACHER & CO., NEW YORK, and ERIC EWERS AB, STOCKHOLM.

Other famous houses whose fabrics are represented in the Courtaulds-Sanderson Collection include Alnwick Castle, Hardwick Hall, Ickworth, Culzean Castle, Burghley House, Osterley Park, Whittingham, Althorp, Holkham, Drummond Castle, Madresfield Court, Knole, Kedleston Hall and Belton House.



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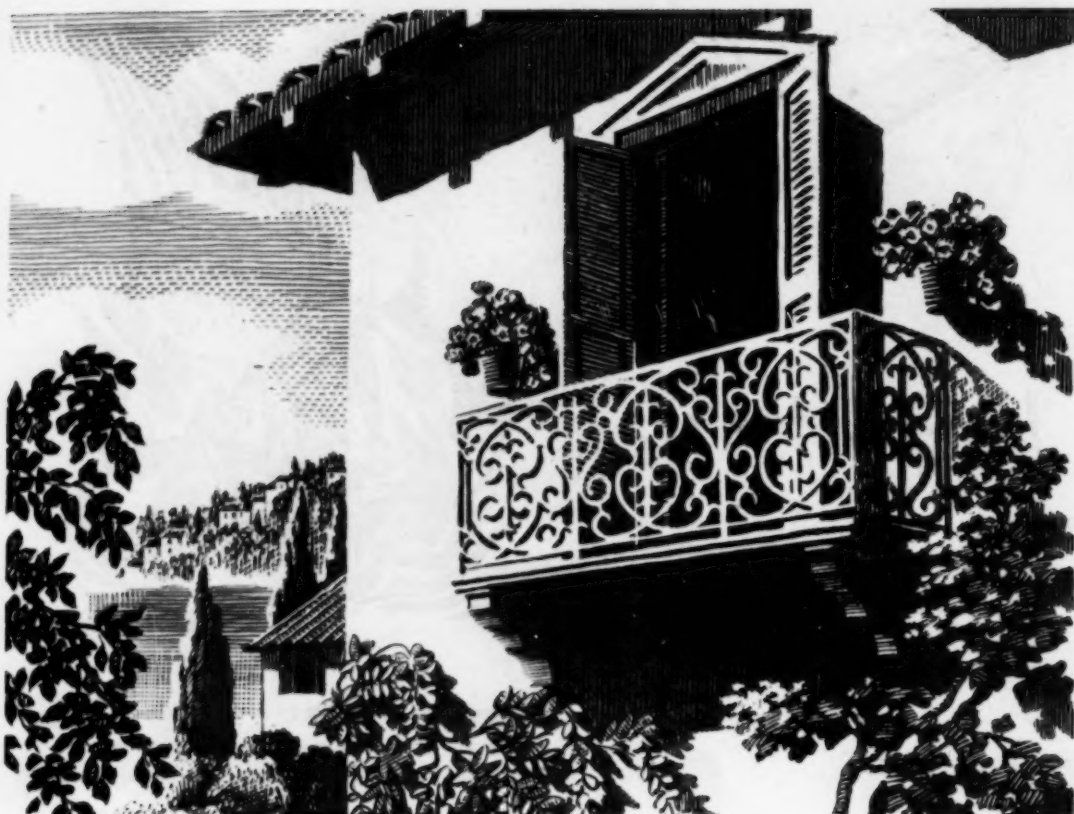
Some enterprising souls cross the Thames on tight-ropes; some write sonnets on threepenny-bits; others deck out fleas in immaculate evening dress for the public diversion. Our achievement is less spectacular, but we believe it to be infinitely more welcome and incomparably more useful. It is in fact the **NEW WORLD 1840 GAS COOKER**. We suggest you visit your local gas showrooms and assess its value as a practical contribution to civilisation. You will soon realise why two million happy housewives are saying:



...it's a



for me!



## A place in the sun

To think that there are places where the sky is always blue and the flowers bloom in January! . . . *Goodness me! is that the time! and I've such a lot to do. I seem to have no energy, these days. I think perhaps it's the weather . . . If only I could get away from it all!*

Yes, we are all children of circumstances, and life today moves faster than it did. In the effort to keep pace we burn up precious energy more freely than we should. Little wonder if at times the daily strain becomes too heavy!

Then it is that Milo can be a great help and benefit. It helps to sustain the balance between energy spent and energy gained. Day by day, each day a little, it supplements the intake of those nutritive and energy-giving elements which are now known to be most beneficial in helping to restore and sustain nervous and physical energy.

Milo is easily digested, and assimilated. It makes a most delicious drink, and taken regularly for a few weeks it can do you nothing but good.

# MILO Cup of Health

to strengthen the young and comfort the old.



$\frac{1}{4}$  lb. 1/6  
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And it is made by NESTLÉ'S





## CHARIVARIA

THE twenty-year-old ban on the import of parrots to the United Kingdom is lifted this week. There is likely to be a brisk demand from political speakers anxious to refresh their memory of the bird's cry.



In Boston a girl dancer consumed a restaurant breakfast consisting of twenty rolls, twenty-four pats of butter, three salads, six pieces of cake, a four-egg omelette, two portions of chipped potatoes, four pieces of toast, a pear tart, two sandwiches and a portion of cottage cheese and peaches covered with sour cream. Presumably her doctor had advised her that for the first meal of the day she should avoid meat.

DDUGLAS



"Again, students often do not know enough about the conditions of life here—the climate, the food, the regulations, above all the high cost of living. Difficulties are constantly arising because students arrive with their fiancées calculated to a nicety and with no margin for emergencies."—*Delhi paper*

The January sales, for instance.

A comedian states that it is his greatest ambition to visit some country behind the Iron Curtain. Well, he ought to find a new gag there.



"CZECHS ACCUSE EMBASSY  
Prague Radio has accused two Britain of Sping."

*Cyrenaica Observer*

It's a lie, whatever it is.

At Virginia Truck Experimental Station, in the U.S.A., it has been found that sheets of aluminium leaf buried between rows of growing vegetables reduce the plants' vulnerability to insects. The pests are, in non-technical language, foiled.

"... over the range from about 450 degrees centigrade to upwards of 500 degrees centigrade, the coal passes through a phase of plasticity during which it can be moulded between the fingers like putty."

*The Elements of Fuel Technology*

With gloves on, that is.

A television receiver that can be let into the fireplace is now available. This automatically solves the problem of what to do with the fireplace.

"In evidence, Mr. Jowett said the idea was that he and the defendant should go into partnership with the hens."

*Craven Herald and Pioneer*

We hope they got a run for their money.

SCHOOLBOYS' OWN EXHIBITION →



## MANY A COUNTRYMAN

MANY a countryman will tell you Jan is the prettiest month of the year's span. Purring with secret pleasure he will trace the pattern of black twigs, like Spanish lace, imprinted on the low and lowering skies.

And then he'll study how his garden lies moribund, in dripping chocolate folds, loving it because he knows it holds the destined daffodil and pheasant's eye.

And in the hedgerows he will find the shy violet cowering from the acid air; and run with eager happy heart to where the frost has worked its transient design on the dead stems of last year's columbine.

Beauty he'll see in long long shafts of rain, in barren hill and puddle-pitted lane, in misted fields and orchards damply sleeping, in wild wet winds that from the east ride leaping to rattle branches where congeals the rook.

But, personally, I prefer not to look.

VIRGINIA GRAHAM

## TOLD AT THE FIRESIDE

I WAS being driven by a man named C— in his motor-car between the little market town of Y— and the village of Q— near Z—, and had just made a remark to him on the extreme beauty of the place-names in that part of the world, when he slowed down and went cautiously over one of the new pedestrian crossings that are so much talked of nowadays.

It was a broad open road between high hedges, and there seemed to be little reason for the band of white stripes at a place where no houses were to be seen.

"I should not have thought you needed a 'zebra' just there," I said.

"I dare say not," he answered. "But I shall endeavour to enlighten you. Possibly you may find somewhat tedious the story which I am burning to relate."

"Do so, none the less," I cajoled him.

About five months ago (he began) I had occasion to hire a car at Y— to convey me to Q— on a business which does not concern our narrative. The driver was a burly, saturnine fellow and not, I thought, a teetotaller. The time was just before dusk of a fine summer's day. Suddenly, at the point we have just been discussing, the man gave a hoarse shout, the car swerved violently, hit the hedge and overturned. I felt a violent blow on the head, and knew no more. When I came to my senses I was lying in the Cottage Hospital at Q—, my face covered with bandages. Besides the nurse in the room there were two policemen sitting on chairs by my bed. They were busily eating my grapes.

"Tell us what you can remember of the accident," they inquired.

I said I was too tired, and asked them to come again the next day. . . .

It turned out that my driver had a very bad record. He drank heavily, and there had been many complaints. The notion of the police appeared to be that if I expired they would be able to bring a charge of manslaughter against him. His story was that a woman had crossed the road just in front of us, with a shawl over her head and a bundle under her arm. He had done his best to avoid her, but doubted whether he had been successful. Now it so happened that exactly in that place there was a legend of a much-wronged lady, four hundred years ago, pursued by a wicked squire who had foully slain her and suffered on the scaffold for his evil deed. The ghost of the woman was often seen by the simple country folk of Q—, and even by the less simple townfolk of Z—. Both places were frequently visited by the Psychical Research Society, who have a remarkable flair for geography. Naturally the police thought that the man who drove me was using this old story to exonerate himself, since nobody had been run over, nor could anyone be found who had been nearly hit by a car. But the fellow said he had never heard of the tale, since he was a comparative newcomer to Y—. What, then, did I know about the incident?

"Up to a point," I told them, "my driver was correct. I, too, saw a figure crossing the road. But it was not the figure of a woman. It was the figure of a man. He wore stockings and some kind of long overcoat."

"But it was not very dark," said one of the policemen. "I wonder he did not see you."

"He could not possibly have done that," I told them.

"And why?"

"He had no head."

They looked at me. Then they looked at the nurse, then they looked at me again.

"To be more precise," I went on, "he had a head, but he was carrying it under his arm; that, I suppose, was what the driver mistook for a bundle. The shawl, no doubt, was his shoulders. I felt certain that we had struck him at the moment when we swerved."

I received compensation for my accident, of course, but they did not proceed against the driver. Do you wonder that the simple folk of Q— have insisted on having this terrible place marked with white bands?

I was so much interested and excited by the story that my friend C— had told me that I made a point of traversing the road between Y— and Q— a day or two afterwards, this time in a taxi-cab. The driver was a burly, saturnine fellow, and it seemed to me had been indulging heavily in the potatoes too common, alas, to this season of the year.

But to my great astonishment I found that there was no pedestrian crossing-place anywhere on that piece of road nor any intention of making one. EVOE



**SHORTSIGHTED**

"No—no one in sight."

## THE CHARLEIGH SCANDAL

THERE seems to be no reason why I should keep silent any longer about the running of the Thimble Stakes at Charleigh last September. Not to put too fine a point on it, it's my belief that the thing was a fiddle from beginning to end.

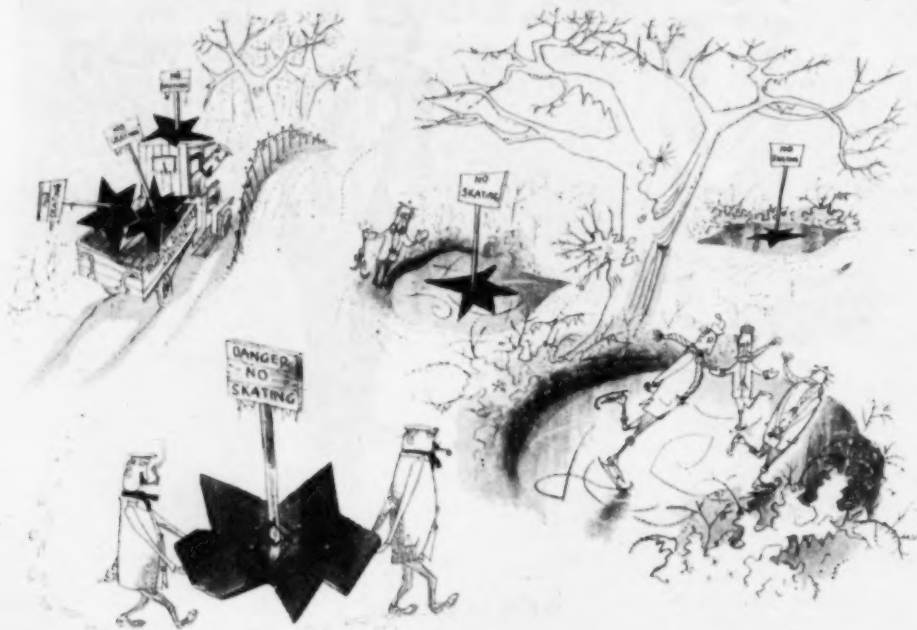
I had a premonition that something was amiss when the starter's hack was found fast asleep in a corner of the paddock, smelling of port. The good-humoured cheers of the crowd as the starter rode past the stands on a hastily-borrowed lady's bicycle did little to allay my fears. My humble half-crown was on the favourite, Brnstndl, at five to four, and my suspicions being aroused, I began to put two and two together. Those stable-boys I had noticed outside a shady-looking loose-box near the course—they hadn't been bound hand and foot for nothing. The hypodermic syringe which someone had thrust

into my pocket in the queue for race cards—had I been hasty in assuming that it was part of a jolly practical joke? I certainly had, I told myself, and from then on I kept my eyes and ears open. All was not well at Charleigh.

The horses began to make their way to the start, and I trained my glasses on them keenly. Jellybaby walked sideways all the way, like a crab. I'll swear that Snuffbox II had only three shoes. Runalot was chasing his tail. Clodhopper (forty-to-one) sped down the course like a rocket, with sparks coming out of his nostrils. Ham Sandwich's jockey had one arm in a sling. Brnstndl, in blinkers, had no jockey at all: he went by with a curious hopping motion. (It wasn't until the end of the race that I noticed the reason for this: his off foreleg and his near hindleg had been tied together with string.) His jockey, L. Dirk, came lurching after him,

smoking a pipe. Bundle o' Sticks was pushed and pulled to the start by an old lady with an umbrella, and the owner, respectively. The old lady was subsequently led from the course by policemen, scattering vegetarian pamphlets. Sing Song and Malevolent went past together, holding one another up, while their jockeys fought with lemonade bottles. Sitting Bull and Irish Giant never showed up at all. (They were later found in an abandoned bus near Edinburgh.)

There were unprecedented scenes at the starting gate. Men with knives sprang from the shrubbery and distracted the starter with badinage while the jockeys threw away their weights. An extra horse called Saveloy, in an obvious disguise, was taken out of a caravan and substituted for Ham Sandwich. Meanwhile the crowd in the half-guinea enclosure had begun to sing some of the good old songs, for the





tea in the refreshment tent was laced with marijuana. Many of the bookies were affected too, their bottles of beer having evidently been tampered with. I could see them laughing uproariously at people who were trying to place bets, and drawing rabbits on their blackboards. By the time the race began, those of the spectators on the rails who had not succumbed to the hashish in the jellied eels were focusing their attention on the hooded figures with Tommy-guns creeping up to the Tote windows. In this way they missed the race itself. I didn't.

It was confusing. To begin with, two of the horses set off with all speed in the wrong direction, and were seen that night by an A.A. man somewhere on the East Lancashire Road. Clodhopper did the course twice before his jockey woke up and stopped him. I suppose technically he was the winner (actually I believe the photo-finish shows an unknown greyhound leading by half a length), but nobody led him in because half the owners were locked in the dressing-rooms and the rest were playing fan-tan with opium pellets in a fortune-teller's tent. Brnstndl tripped himself up after half a furlong, and I distinctly saw Bundle o' Sticks lassoed at the quarter-mile by a man in a tree. I couldn't make out what became of Jellybaby, but I fancy it was his jockey who returned on the starter's bicycle.

The judges were shaking their heads rather dubiously by the time Runalot reeled home last, ridden by a man in a cloth cap; and I for one don't blame them. I am not to be intimidated by all these anonymous letters signed with very crude daggers—I will speak out.

*Can nothing be done?*

ALEX ATKINSON

"In particular, Mr. Smith's services as secretary-treasurer of the Association for 255 years were being honoured and during the evening he was presented with a fireside chair."—*Head Teachers Review*  
Well, he'd earned a rest.



"Ah, well, 'Many a true word spoken in jest'."

## OUTSIDER

"YOU honestly mean you're not interested in the machinery of government?"

"I do."

"The relationship between the central government and local government doesn't fascinate you?"

"No."

"What about the technique of administration?"

"What about it?"

"Doesn't it intrigue you?"

"I regret to disappoint you. Not a bit."

"You know what I mean—the art of tactic and manoeuvre, the way to get things done."

"If I want things done I find it's best to do them myself."

"But apart from getting the results you're after, don't you enjoy the processes—gauging the other man's reactions, and anticipating the way he's going to jump?"

"I do not."

"When you're sitting round the conference table, don't you have fun sizing up the protagonists on the two sides, and trying to foresee the contribution each will make to the discussion?"

"No."

"And when you find things working out as you expected, don't you chuckle to yourself with satisfaction?"

"I certainly don't."

"Have you considered views?"

"Have I considered whose views?"

"I mean have you formulated opinions?"

"On what?"

"On matters of common interest of course. Suppose I were to say to you 'What are your views on so-and-so?' Could you answer me?"

"Not on any subject I can think of at the moment, no."

"Could you hold your own in a discussion?"

"I doubt it."

"Not on anything?"

"Nothing. That's a fair statement, I think. No."

"But you agree with discussion, don't you—I mean you favour reaching a balanced conclusion after considering both sides of the argument?"

"No."

"What do you think about working as a team, then?"

"I'm against it."

"Organization doesn't seem desirable to you?"

"No."

"I don't understand you. These are essentials, it seems to me, in the practice of government. If you don't subscribe to them what are you doing here?"

"I'm one of the governed, up for the day."

G. A. C. WITHERIDGE



### ANY BRENTS OR BARNACLES?

ACCORDING to my guide-book, St. James's Park was first enclosed by Henry VIII, who acquired the land from the Abbot of Westminster. Charles II opened the Park, if not to the public, at least to the aristocratic frontagers; and it was he who made the lake and started a collection of birds by what is still called Birdcage Walk. "The general right of entry," says the guide-book, "was won gradually, and partly by the difficulty of devising any satisfactory scheme of exclusion." By the eighteenth century the number of keys in existence, authorized and unauthorized, made the Park in fact a public place. Boswell, from his lodgings in Downing Street, sought recreation there at all hours. "To see the variety of people in the Park again," he writes, "put me all in a flutter." He does not mention the birds: either they were not there or they did not flutter him.

All the variety of people commonly seen in the larger parks are now found in St. James's.



There are perhaps fewer children (there cannot be many families living near); and during the lunch hour the junior Civil Servants from Whitehall form a well-marked sub-species. Everybody goes to the bridge to throw bread to the birds or watch it thrown. I have not yet seen the pea-vendors of Trafalgar Square selling loaves in St. James's; there must be some regulation against

it, because they would be on to a cast-iron thing.

But the Park belongs by right to the birds. They live there; and they view the visiting public with the supercilious dependence of the occupiers of National Trust properties. Or rather, it belongs to the birds and Mr. Tom Hinton, who lives with them on Duck Island. Mr. Hinton has been there for fifty-one years—longer, surely, than any of his birds. I did not ask him his present age, but he was



turned seventy before he had so much as a twinge of rheumatism. Considering that he lives in what must be one of the dampest places on earth, this is sufficient testimony. Mr. Hinton is wonderfully well preserved; a Hertfordshire man, from Tring. He has no staff under him, though the birds of St. James's are not his sole charge, and he does everything for them, from building them quasi-natural shelters to nest in (they will not nest in boxes) to

bailing exhausted and land-locked swans out of metropolitan police-stations. The devotion and knowledge of a lifetime are, of course, more than equal to the task; but I cannot help thinking that he should have an apprentice. This kind of knowledge is a thing to be communicated only through that kind of relationship; and it is much too precious to lose. The cult of bird-watching should be able to produce a devotee willing to indenture himself for another half-century in what must be, to the right man, one of the most satisfactory jobs going.



Mr. Hinton was awarded the B.E.M. in 1948; as the guardian of one of the nation's shrines he deserves no less.

Duck Island is no longer,

strictly speaking, an island at all: it should be Duck Peninsula. When it was built in 1845 Mr. Hinton's lodge had, apparently, a foot on each shore; it was built in two parts connected by a colonnaded bridge, and afforded, in itself, sole access to the Island. When the pumping station was made (the lake is now fed from artesian wells) its demands made this ideal arrangement impossible. A tarmac isthmus now runs alongside the lodge, and the bridge has become a sort of atoa. The attractiveness of the original design was, if anything, increased by bombing. The colonnade is now well out of true, and the lodge, twisted, ivy-grown and as high and dry as a lily pad, is as distinctive as its occupant.

The birds include everything from coots and the commoner ducks to superbly dressed exotic geese native to anywhere from India to Alaska. The new colony of pelicans, whose acquisition has

received so much publicity recently, are not yet in residence; they are at the Zoo, getting themselves acclimatized. None of the birds in the Park is caged. Some of the more exotic are "pinioned." To the layman this suggests that they have their wings tied behind their backs or drag little cannon-balls on chains; but we did not see any in this condition. The word apparently implies the permanent removal of one essential component of the mechanism of flight; no difference is visible to the inexperienced eye.

All the rest are free. The mallards flight to feed, so Mr. Hinton believes, in the open country around London; and tufted duck ringed in St. James's have been, like other aerial trespassers across the Iron Curtain, shot down in Russia. Freest of all, perhaps, are the sea-birds, who drop in—owing, no doubt, to the difficulty of devising any satisfactory scheme of exclusion—to enjoy the bounty of the Ministry of Works and the bird-minded and bread-laden British public. Their natural rapaciousness and superb aerobatics secure for them a share they would



hardly be entitled to if they were the pride of the collection.

The catalogue consists of a series of coloured pictures set up under glass on the north shore of the lake. Every variety represented in St. James's is shown and two that are, alas, at present unrepresented. With such exotics present as the Snow Goose of Alaska and the Chinese Goose, who doubles his attraction by coming unexpectedly from Africa, it is disconcerting to find that the missing breeds are the comparatively simple-sounding Brent and Barnacle Geese. I do not,

as will by now be apparent, know much about geese; but the Barnacle must surely be part of the English maritime tradition, and the Brent should, on the Chinese principle, come from Ealing. There is only one dealer known to Mr. Hinton who sells things like pairs of wild geese. And they come expensive: Red-breasted Geese (from the Caspian) would cost, he reckons, £35 the pair. (And he may be optimistic, at that. No less an authority than Mr. Peter Scott quoted



£100 a pair just over a year ago.) It is on private or public benefaction that the collection must mainly rely for its accessions.

For beauty you can take your pick.

I do not think the Mandarin and the like, for all their complicated elegance, can be reckoned handsomer than the male Mallard; and to the masculine mind there is something admirable in the Mallard's brilliance against the tweedy domesticity of his wife. The loveliest bird we saw was a mistake. There was a pair of Indian Ruddy Sheld-duck sitting side by side on the water's edge like polished copper pots on a shelf, a picture of conjugal harmony, and beside them sat a hybrid bred on the female by one of the exotic geese. Nature, it is well known, lavishes on such irregular children gifts which she withholds from the lawful. But this was no bouncing Shakespearean bastard, but a creature of a delicate and quite entrancing beauty. The copper and the silver-grey, the heat and the cold, the tropic and the arctic, were magically blended. And no one but



Mr. Hinton, apparently, knew the truth—least of all the Ruddy Sheld-duck.

There are those who do not feel that they are really watching birds

unless they (the watchers) are up to their knees in water, shaken with cold and, preferably, disguised as some form of vegetation. But for others, who prefer to leave the wading to the birds, St. James's is the place.

I should like to see the Park as the fighting mallard see it at dusk, a dark, wet pocket in the arid brilliance of London. This being impossible, a visit on foot on a mild winter's day, with mist in the bare trees, has much to offer the ordinarily contemplative man. And if anyone has a spare pair of Brents or Barnacles, will he please bring them with him? I should not care to explain why, but it would be a direct contribution to our national heritage.

P. M. HUBBARD



Mr. Tom Hinton, B.E.M.

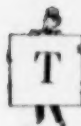


Angela Vickars—ELIZABETH TAYLOR Alice Tripp—SHELLEY WINTERS  
George Eastman—MONTGOMERY CLIFT

(A Place in the Sun)

## AT THE PICTURES

*A Place in the Sun—Mr. Denning Drives North*



HERE seems to be pretty general agreement that in the film adaptation of THEODORE DREISER'S "An American Tragedy" which is called *A Place in the Sun* (Director: GEORGE STEVENS) most of the sociological overtones have disappeared, so that the unhappy young man (here called George Eastman—the names are changed, for no apparent reason) is presented as one driven to his doom by practically nothing but love. Perhaps I am being too easily satisfied with only a fraction of what DREISER thought it necessary to emphasize in illustration of his principal character's other motives, but it does seem to me that the other motives are there, and the more effectively for being hinted at and "under-treated" rather than rubbed in. On the surface the story has become a tragedy of passionate love, which was not DREISER's point at all. The early scenes, however, which show the young man's first contact with his rich relatives and the working on his mind of the notion that similar opulence might be his, are full of the right sort of implications—even though they may pass unnoticed by those people who are waiting in relaxed half-interest for the girls to appear. The girls turn out to be very good: SHELLEY WINTERS is admirable

in pathos, bitterness, anger, resignation as the factory-girl who finds she is bearing George's child, ELIZABETH TAYLOR does well in the more obvious and simple part of the rich young beauty he falls in love with later. As George himself MONTGOMERY CLIFT seems to me to be most successful in the first half of the picture, where he has a chance to show the young man's loneliness and uncertainty and hint at his ambition. Later, the character is no more than a desperate lover tormented by the idea of murder as a way out of his trouble, and the emphasis is as it were on the emotion of the love scenes rather than on the individuality of either participant. There are many points of technique I have no room to discuss: the effective use of enormous close-ups, the frequent connecting of shots by double-exposure or by the carrying over of sound from one shot into the next, the often brilliant camera-work (particularly in dark scenes) . . . It's not a great film and it does to some extent alter the point of the original, but it's good and profoundly interesting.

It surprises me to note that *Mr. Denning Drives North* (Director: ANTHONY KIMMINS) has been generally taken with great seriousness and criticized accordingly because—

this is really what it comes to—because it is amusing. I admit to having enjoyed it very much. Perhaps the objectors simply set out with the idea that it was meant to be a serious drama of suspense about a man racked by fears after hiding the body of someone he had killed, and that therefore any touches of comic absurdity in the detail were conspicuously out of place. Well, I'm usually as much offended as anybody by inappropriate switches of mood; the fact in this instance, I suppose, is merely that it never occurred to me that the mood was meant to be stern and sombre anyway. Deprived of the subsequent satisfaction of laughing at unconscious humour, I had to make do with the pleasure of being amused by humour that was (to the best of my belief) deliberate. I still think it was deliberate; the imaginative skill and intelligence with which the individual scenes are written, played, directed and put together admit of no other conclusion.

### Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

In London, *Miss Julie* (12/12/51) and *The Red Badge of Courage* (28/11/51) are in their different ways outstanding. A good light French one is *Three Telegrams* (2/1/52).

The last two weeks' releases include *Lady Godiva Rides Again* (7/11/51), enjoyable fun; and *Encore* (28/11/51), the third group of Maugham stories.

RICHARD MALLETT



(Mr. Denning Drives North)  
Mr. Denning—JOHN MILLS



## POSTMAN'S KNOCK

MY mother wrote and said she was as mad as blazes. She had had a letter from Aunt Mabel enclosing one written to Aunt Dora by Aunt Ethel. In her letter Aunt Ethel said (to Aunt Dora) that my mother was taking a terrible risk in letting me live away from home in London. My mother was absolutely furious. She couldn't get over it. Aunt Ethel, of all people! Aunt Ethel, who was frightened of taxi-drivers and had never in her life got in the right train. Aunt Ethel wasn't qualified to look after a stuffed canary and was in no position to throw stones at my mother. My mother was furious, too, at Aunt Dora for sending the letter to Aunt Mabel. What right had they to discuss her? Aunt Dora's Elizabeth lived in London, didn't she? Was Aunt Dora implying that she had brought up Elizabeth better than my mother had brought up me? And how dared Aunt Mabel send the letter to my mother? My mother would have much preferred to know nothing about it, although she was glad she did because now she knew exactly where she was. The whole thing was utterly outrageous and quite typical of Aunt Ethel. My mother was speechless.

She had written to Aunt Ethel, Aunt Dora and Aunt Mabel and told them exactly what she thought of them. She had sent the letter to Aunt Gertrude.

My mother wrote again a few days later. She had heard from Aunt Gertrude who said she had already had a letter enclosing a copy of Aunt Ethel's letter from Aunt Dora. And Aunt Gertrude quite agreed with Aunt Dora that it was an impertinence and I was just as well able to look after myself as Elizabeth or Aunt Ethel. So it seemed that my mother had got it wrong about Aunt Dora who had been on her side all the time.

But she had also had a letter from Aunt Ada who had had Aunt Ethel's letter from Aunt Gertrude. Aunt Ada agreed with Aunt Mabel when she said that Aunt Gertrude was right when she said there might be something in it. London was a

bed of vice and sometimes she thought it was a pity.

Aunt Ada had then sent the letter by mistake to Aunt Mabel who, of course, had had it before, and Aunt Mabel sent it to Aunt Gertrude. Aunt Gertrude had had it before too, but she said she was glad to have it again because she had found a lot more in it this time. Aunt Gertrude, my mother wrote, was livid because she thought Aunt Ethel was really getting at her for letting Enid go to Paris for her holiday. Aunt Gertrude wrote to Aunt Ada about this and said exactly what she thought of Aunt Ethel.

My mother wrote again. She had had a letter from Aunt Ada enclosing the letter from Aunt Gertrude and she thought that maybe Aunt Gertrude was right. It might have been hitting at Enid all the time. She had sent Aunt Gertrude's letter to Aunt Dora.

Then Aunt Dora wrote to my mother and enclosed a letter from

Aunt Mabel. Aunt Mabel said she had sent Aunt Ethel's letter to my mother because she thought my mother ought to try and get me home again. So there it was—Aunt Ethel had been getting at my mother and not Aunt Gertrude.

My mother sent Aunt Mabel's letter (written to Aunt Dora) to Aunt Gertrude, who had written back immediately and said she thought Aunt Ethel was getting at both of them. She for one (Aunt Gertrude) was never going to speak to Aunt Ethel again and was sending the tea-cosy she had just knitted to my mother instead.

So my mother sent Aunt Gertrude a guest towel and was never going to speak to Aunt Ethel again either.

So there it was. And now it was all over, my mother didn't want to hear another word. Not one word. She wasn't sorry it had happened, however; she felt at least it had cleared the air.

MARJORIE RIDDELL



"Because I dislike shaving."

## TOFFEES IN THE THIRD FLOOR BACK

IF this should catch the eye of the bearded gentleman whose landlady recently accused him before the Chelsea Rent Tribunal of eating toffees in bed I would like him to know that he has my deepest sympathy. I am not bearded, and I do not eat toffees in bed—or, indeed, anywhere else, for reasons which other married men will appreciate—but I have had considerable experience of landladies, and in my time they have accused me of almost everything from riding a bicycle downstairs to making a bath-tap drip to the tune of "The Red Flag" on a Sunday.

Whether the balance of one's mind has to be disturbed before one opens one's doors to the troglodytes, or whether (as I suspect) even the strongest character crumbles under the strain of enduring the idiosyncrasies of others, it is a fact that many of my landladies were somewhat unusual.

Mrs. Bridle, for example, who kept what she described on her cards as "Select Gentlemen's Apartments" off the Woodstock Road, Oxford, was haunted by the imaginary smell of frying fish. At least once a week she shattered the evening quiet of her house by charging madly up to the top storey shouting "Someone's cooking kippers! Someone's cooking kippers! Someone's cooking kippers—it's a thing I won't allow!" As she raced up the stairs her brogue-shod feet beat out the savage tempo of her words, and those of us who had lived there for

a while found ourselves breaking involuntarily into an uninhibited dance as we listened.

By the time Mrs. Bridle reached the attics we all had our doors open, like troops standing by for a kit inspection, and when she had got her breath back she used to make her way slowly down to the basement, sniffing accusingly towards each of us in turn, a black look of frustration spreading over her face like treacle on a boiled pudding. This was a regular performance, as I have said, but Mrs. Bridle never succeeded in finding any food of any sort being fried, grilled, baked, boiled, stewed, smoked, or roasted—indeed, I believe the only cooking that was ever done in her rooms was by a pale young man who kept the books of a Christmas club, and left unexpectedly one December.

But whereas Mrs. Bridle's imaginative nose did no more than lead her in search of non-existent kippers, the suspicious ears of Mrs. Quaife, who kept a desperately respectable establishment near Folly Bridge, made her believe that she was harbouring under her roof a collection of potential hooligans. Her hearing was far from good, but her mind's ear could detect sounds that were completely inaudible to all other humans.

"By the way, Mr. Er—um—er," she said to me one morning (she addressed most of her tenants in that manner, for she had a bad memory for names), "please don't hammer tins in your room after eleven at night." "Mrs. Quaife," I said, "I have never hammered anything in my room, not even before eleven." "I wouldn't expect you to admit it," she said, "being as you're much more than old enough to know better." "But I assure you—" I began. "Say no more, Mr. Er—um—er," she said. "You know where to draw the line, I'm sure. I rely on you to toe it in future."

In time I gave up arguing with her; whether I was accused of hand-bell-ringing or wrestling, of bursting balloons or barking like a dog, I used to promise not to let it occur again and all was well. Exemplary

behaviour was lost on Mrs. Quaife; she was happiest with a house full of repentant sinners and the confident knowledge that only her constant vigilance ensured the preservation of what she called "the cardinal's decencies."

Mrs. Bridle and Mrs. Quaife were fundamentally eccentric, I admit, but I have found even the most uncomplicated landladies capable of unforeseen effervescence. Mrs. Donovan of Baywater, for example, who was usually as unemotional as cold porridge, almost threw me out of her house when I wore a green tie. She said it was like a red rag to a bull to her, on account of Cromwell. I hadn't the faintest idea what she meant, and I don't think she had either. Mrs. Heeping of Holland Park insisted that her boiler blew up because I turned a hot-water tap off too quickly, and Mrs. Murch of Wimpole Street shook with rage when she told me to stop getting letters from Weston-super-Mare; they made her think of her husband, she said, and her nerves were bad enough already.

But it was Mrs. Debitt of Kensington who really made me lose confidence in myself. In the presence of her three other tenants and the milkman she denounced me as being responsible for her dachshund's attack of distemper. She said she knew very well that I mixed with almost any dog that said "Hullo" in the street, and that I had undoubtedly brought a complete set of germs home with me. I pointed out, with all due deference, that I had never read or heard of a human being having distemper, but Mrs. Debitt was not impressed. "I don't say you've got it," she said, "—not yet; but you're probably a carrier."

The dog, which recovered very quickly, bore me not the slightest ill-will, but I moved as soon as possible. I just couldn't stand the way Mrs. Debitt looked at me; I felt her eyes searching confidently for the first signs of a hot nose.

Ah, well; I suppose it's difficult to live and let live when one has to live and let.







*"The teas are three shillings each, half-price for the little girl."*

## WINTER

THE English have long had a reputation for running water-pipes down the outsides of their houses and telling themselves that it'll be all right; there won't be a winter, not this year anyway. I don't know how long, but the more you think of it the less it ties up with the frozen rigours of this island's meteorological past. Anyway, let us turn to the bright side and begin this article by thinking of the ingenious methods that do exist, even here, for getting through this toughest of seasons.

For one thing, we have worked a long way up from the discovery of fire; look at that special gold radiator-paint, and the sudden new range in hot-water bottle colours—a sort of cyclamen, the only one left at the price—and the now near-mystical science of lagging; and fur boots that you can't take off, and cocoa and armchairs that make going to bed as difficult as getting up.

Then there are long brisk walks; a feature of winter

that can be recalled with quite a rush of atmosphere on a summer's day. Indeed, it is rather a comment on modern winters that when you think of winter at a distance you are more likely to see yourself negotiating the petrified humps of a once muddy field than having a jolly snowball fight. Not that, given half a chance, people don't have jolly snowball fights—though that is perhaps not a very good description of the unconcern with which passers-by steel themselves for a whop on the shoulder.

But to go back to the walks, of which the longest and briskest is the week-end morning walk—held over a special visitors' course and lasting a field longer than the visitors would personally have thought necessary—and the shortest is that routine trudge between Christmas dinner and Christmas tea. Winter walks are highly characteristic affairs of bare trees, rooks, bare hedgerows—that's a thing the imagination can never quite conjure up in summer, not the actual hedgerows but what's left underneath of the weeds—and non-heating

sunshine and smoky dusks; but what I really wanted to point out is the wrapping-up beforehand, particularly the establishment of a relationship between scarf and chin, and the round of stroking accorded to visiting fur gloves.

Winter, as I was saying, always comes as a bit of a shock to the English, but we are a resilient people and in no time at all are dividing it into two sections and telling each other that by Christmas it'll be half over. (This is an ingenious idea, because it makes full use of the telescopic effect of the shopping-days racket.) The second half, not to be considered seriously until you can see over the wall or trip-wire or whatever constitutes your mental barrier for New Year's Day, is therefore little more than January, I mean it's February and everyone knows how little that is. After February the winter is morally over; all you get is people saying it ought to be warmer by now.

Whatever the trend of modern times, I think I must say something about frost and snow and ice. The chief function of ice, apart from being not thick enough to skate on, is to burst water-pipes and blame it on the thaw. Frost is a mysterious element, either granulated sugar or black, and people talking about black frost haven't the least idea what they mean. Even white frost takes a certain amount of observing and counts as a very minor discovery. Snow in any quantity needs no powers of observation beyond that first perennially exciting moment when you see it on the bedroom ceiling.

Other points about snow are that it tends to fall unseen at night but often begins the season with a lunch-time display that doesn't settle; that it falls from a dirty sky which some people specialize in recognizing beforehand, and that it warms the weather for atmospheric reasons that many of us could once have explained. Also it squeaks when trodden on and is used for snowmen; and I wonder if it has been fully realized that this cheery, pipe-smoking, coal-buttoned, turnip-faced figure is as rigid an art form as the sonnet.

This brings me to crumpets. It would be nice to have a picture here, because shading would do a much better job than words on the quilting. That is the top side, of course; no one would want to draw the other side, which is even more of a let-down than the other side of a gramophone record. Still, we might as well turn our mental picture over to note its only feature, a sort of charred arc with a scraped-at edge.

ANDE

"A consignment of about 4,000 lbs. of fresh fish from the Mettur Reservoir was to-day received at Central station in an insulated refrigerator van attached to the Cochin Express.

The Food Minister, Mr. J. L. P. Roche Victoria, the Food Commissioner for Food Production, Mr. V. S. Hejmadi, Mr. J. M. Lobo Prabhu, Development Secretary, Mr. K. N. Anantaraman Director of Fisheries, and other officials were at the station to receive the van."—*Madras Mail*

That should have soothed its feelings.

## ENCHANTED QUEST

THE poet treads a winding road  
That runs in turn to west and east,  
The path his drunken brothers strode,  
The path he knows the best, and least.

His laughter is the mirth of ghosts  
Who ride the midnight on the gale;  
His sorrow is the sea's, at coasts  
Of morning when the lodestar's pale.

He seeks a thing the gods have sought  
And tired of seeking. O believe  
His bane is beauty, never caught  
By all his nets of cunning weave.

In haunted forests of the mind  
The mesh of gold and silver falls:  
His spear is poised to stab the wind  
That mocks from distant mountain walls.

And from the pinnacle of day,  
Scored by the passage of his climb,  
He hears below, behind him, bay  
The ever-patient hounds of Time.







## THE LONG LOANING

ONE foot in either country,  
 Its fee divided still,  
 The smugglers' road from Ayton  
 Comes winding down the hill,  
 By lonely shiel and steading,  
 Through copee and pasture heading  
 To where the waters fill  
 With whisperings the valleys,  
 The green and lovely valleys  
 Where Tweed its levy rallies  
 From Whitadder and Till.

The wild hedge-roses dying  
 Their scalloped petals spill;  
 Only the peewits crying  
 Answer the linnet's trill;  
 Only the cattle lowing,  
 Munching and softly blowing,  
 Deep in the cowslips glowing  
 Stand sleepily and still,  
 Heedless of ghosts that flicker,  
 Ghosts with their kegs of liquor,  
 Ponies that mutely whicker,  
 Phantoms with bow and bill,  
 Spectres of old free traders,  
 English and Scots invaders,  
 Whose noiseless footfalls fill  
 The lane they call The Loaning,  
 The ancient Border Loaning,  
 The smugglers' road from Ayton  
 That rambles down the hill.



## ON THE MOVE

THREE years ago when the Gallup Poll popped the question "If you were free to do so, would you like to go and settle in another country" the number of would-be emigrants was remarkably high. The *News Chronicle* of April 19, 1948, gave the figure as 42 per cent of all those interviewed—pretty nearly half the population. And for men and women in their twenties the figure was as high as 58 per cent.

Every war is followed by large migratory movements of the human species. People take up their beds and walk to lands which they think will escape the *next* war, lands in which they can begin life anew with space to breathe, wax enterprising and bring up their children in perfect freedom. In most of us perhaps the nomadic urge lies dormant, stifled by domestic circumstance, until it is resuscitated by the earthquake of war or by unbearable economic duress. It is no accident that Britain should have lost, on balance, 1,500,000 of its citizens between 1918 and 1930 and gained about 800,000 between 1931 and 1939. In the 'thirties this country was still relatively more prosperous (or less depressed) than any country in the world.

All the same, the Gallupian figures for 1948 seem distinctly on the high side. I suspect that the weather during the first quarter of the year had been as miserable as the food news and the Budget prospects. There must have been innumerable vile colds and unpaid bills in circulation. Yes, and we had just completed the most disastrous cricket tour in the history of the M.C.C.—a tour of the West Indies without a single victory.

Now turn to a more recent inquiry. In December, 1951, the number of people under thirty years old who expressed themselves eager to settle abroad was only 31 per cent (the over-thirties, 21 per cent). This sudden switch of public opinion can be attributed, according to taste, to a variety of factors. It may have been produced by the dramatic eleventh-hour revival of



Conservative hopes and the return of the old maestro in the siren suit; it may reflect the nation's deep satisfaction with the six years of Mr. Attlee's benevolent paternalism; it may even portend a sensational return of Liberalism. It may have some connection with the opening of new television transmitters, with the disarmament proposals, with the recent improvement in the supply of export rejects to the home market, with rumours of an increase in the specific gravity of beer, with almost anything. The important point is that Britain has, apparently, become a more desirable country to settle in these last few years.

It may be that we ought to greet this news with a display of

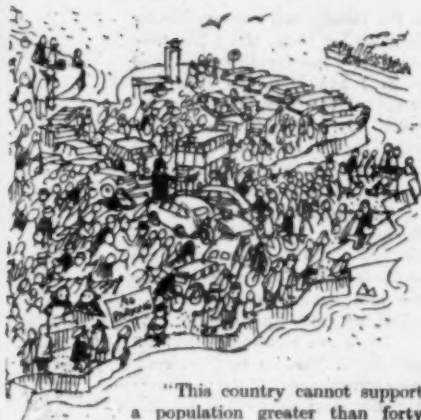
public rejoicing, but I don't know—the economists won't tell us whether to laugh or cry. Fresh from a long and wordy internecine brawl over subsidies (they couldn't decide, you may remember, whether they are inflationary or disinflationary) they have agreed to differ on the question of population policy. They quarrel over the size of an optimum population for Britain, and they don't know whether we ought to encourage emigration or immigration.

Here are a few representative pronouncements, translated into fairly readable verbiage.

"Britain is grossly overpopulated. If we could reduce our numbers by twenty millions we should be healthier, happier, more

prosperous and strategically much less vulnerable . . ." (Professor H. D. Sauerkrank.)

"We need more workers, more people. We must try to expand through immigration. Italy has two million unemployed; Greece has three hundred thousand potential emigrants every year and Holland sixty-five thousand; Germany and Austria have more than a million ready to move. Let us open our doors . . ." (Professor Buffer.)



"This country cannot support a population greater than forty millions without wearing itself out in the process. Emigration to the wide open spaces of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and the Colonies is the only answer." (Doctor Contango.)

"Every new mouth is accompanied by a new pair of hands, and these can be strengthened by abundant horse-power: we have full employment and we could provide full employment for another ten millions. Why not?" (Professor Oilcake.)

Oddly enough there is, I think, something to be said for each of these declarations. The successors of Malthus have behind their argument a formidable array of solid facts. Our population is highly congested. We have 537 people to the square mile (Holland, 746; Belgium, 730) compared with Australia's 3, Canada's 4, New Zealand's 19, South Africa's 26 and the United States' 50. Three's company, nineteen's comfortable, but five

hundred and thirty-seven's a crowd. The economic advantages upon which our prosperity and dense population were based in the nineteenth century have been whittled away: we are no longer the chief workshop of the world, and our manufactured goods steadily earn less food and raw materials in the world's markets. Our overcrowding eats up the amount of land available for agriculture, makes travel and transport expensive, cumbersome and hazardous, and makes us just about the easiest sitting target in the world for the germs of the common cold, cyclones (or "Lows"), cars and atom-bombers.

We and our Commonwealth cousins would be happier, say the neo-Malthusians, if the population of the United Kingdom were reduced by heavy emigration.

We should be safer and wealthier, say the supporters of Professors Buffer and Oilcake, if we had enough workers to man all our mines, farms, factories, offices, shops and guns. Britain must remain a Great Power, so we must expand; we must expand because merely to stay put is construed as a sign of weakness. We have not yet reached economic maturity and cannot achieve our goal without a large and assured labour force. Britain needs a home market as large as America's—so that our manufacturers can adopt mass-production techniques and flood the world with cheap goods of superlative quality and tasteful design.

Read through the above carefully and then state clearly and concisely, in not more than fifty thousand words, why you are in favour of either mass emigration or mass immigration. Or both. Yes,



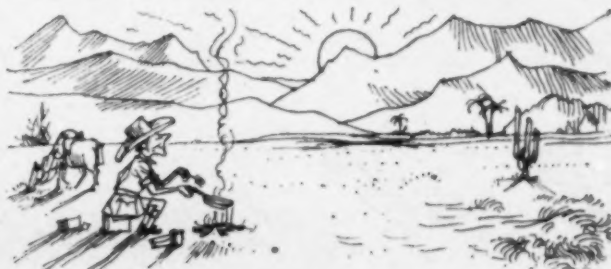
another suggestion is that we should act as a sort of transit depot for Europeans anxious to settle in the British Dominions and Colonies. Italians, Poles, Dutchmen, Germans and other emigrés would be "assimilated" here before being passed on as guaranteed British stock to the countries of the Commonwealth. The assimilation treatment would of course include the rudiments of cricket, British cookery and humour.

So the problem of population can be tackled in three ways: we can export, import, or re-export.

At the moment we are doing a little of each. In 1949 about 140,000 British people emigrated and in return we welcomed some 120,000 immigrants. The number of re-exports is not given in the official returns, and I will make no guesses. I can tell you, however, with reasonable certainty that Australia (53,000), Canada (20,000), South Africa (11,000) and New Zealand (9,000) were the favourite reception areas for our emigrés, and in a second article I hope to probe skin-deep into the hopes, aspirations and settlement problems of these adventurers.

I want to have the knowledge at my finger-tips—just in case.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD







### NEVER MIND

**W**HEN I founded my go-anywhere or do-anything business, I was under no delusions. I knew that I might have to start humbly. It was so. At the moment I am a minder. The payment is good for the class of work done, but I feel I want something more bizarre—more cosmopolitan.

Part of the trouble is that the child I mind scorns its belled reins, its nested tins and rolling thing that rolls back itself after it has been rolled. All it wants to do is throw small stones in water.

The beginning of the path leading to the pond is so well camouflaged that the Germans would not have found it. But when I try to pass it by animatedly drawing attention to attractions across the road, the child protests so piercingly that doors are opened.

Another drawback is that I have to find the stones. There aren't many about, for the local soil is sandy. I pick a few from the gutter as we go up the road. I start picking as soon as the child decides whether to face me from the pram or show me its back. It does not alternate

but works on a system of its own. Accordingly, I mostly have to grapple with a complicated apparatus governing the move-over of the handle.

One of these days either the child or I will be semi-decapitated.

There is good in everything, though, and I have found that a close study of gutter is as fascinating as that of hedge or field. On the second day I discovered a desiccated prawn. I could write a monograph on the fastness of dyes in different cigarette packets. And a trodden-on acid drop, put under a microscope, would look like stalagmites.

The pond is only tiny. It lies about a yard inside the field and is separated from the path by a low fence. I lift the child from the pram and stride over the fence with him.

He has not a very good aim. When he raises his arm the stone either drops behind him or he throws and hits his own foot. Even when I pick him up and hold him forward as if he were about to kiss the Blarney Stone he sometimes misses the pond.

He surprised me this afternoon. I had cleared all the surface stones

in the vicinity and was now having to grope for them, like a pig after truffles. I had just disinterred one when I saw that the child had contrived to throw his hat in the pond. It is a hat with a black velvet peak surmounted by a small black velvet bow, rather like those worn by the old-time burglars.

I turned sideways and, with one leg and arm outstretched towards the hat and the other leg in the opposite direction accompanying the arm fending off the child, I edged my finger-tips forward.

I now saw something I had not seen before: that the ripples spreading out to the edge of the pond were actually carrying the hat towards the centre, in little bobbing movements. Bored by the child's importuning, I soon had my legs incredibly split and my left foot ankle-deep in the pond. Fortunately the tide turned from ebb to flow and I was able to grab the hat. It looked like a drowned mole.

I was squeezing it out when a voluminous woman, tight-waisted as a cottage loaf, stopped in the path and told me that on no account should I put it on the child's head in that condition. It was here that





I realized that both my feet were in the pond. The woman went on to say that in her opinion a hat of that type should be steeped with soap flakes for twenty-four hours and washed cold. Or, if a quicker result was desired, the hat, having been swilled, should be placed over an inverted basin and gently soaped...

I interrupted her by emerging from the pond and making squealing noises. It was impolite, for she evidently was a speaker who liked to have the eye of her auditor; but I had to emerge, I was sitting up.

I put the child over the fence. He approached the woman, who bent over him and left him with a gentle pat on the head. Meanwhile, I removed my shoes and socks and then strapped the child in the pram. It was a fine afternoon and I put the hat and socks on the fence to be drying. I thrust my shoes beneath the pram and entered the field to pluck grass to stuff into them for a while.

I have read poems telling of fair women whose feet gleamed like alabaster as they tripped lightly through dewy grass. All I can say is that the grass must have been less stubbly than that I was in. I returned to the path on my hands and knees, with the thought in my mind that soon I should be facing the child's parent.

Regaining the path, I saw that the child had pushed the hat and socks over the fence. He was now making it very plain that he wanted the pram handle moved over again. What troubled me most, though, was seeing that his face and the front of his light-green coat were only a shade lighter than a Kentucky minstrel. The woman had smuggled him a caramel.

I felt depressed as I left the house of my employer. I could see no hope. It wasn't as if she had given me notice to cease looking after the child; she pleaded with me to keep on minding him.

## FAITH AND WORKS

**I** BOUGHT an all-electric bedside clock  
To rouse me at the dawn's unwitching hour.  
Waking (at ten) this morning, with a shock,  
I found that it had failed for lack of power.  
A ticking timepiece now stands in its stead;  
Faith without works is, manifestly, dead.

E. V. MILNER



"Sir Henry, 82 years old, is a cabinet maker."—*Evening Standard*  
More ash-trays might help.

"I think I'd get better marks for conduct if I didn't go so often."



Martha—MR. NORMAN EVANS

Humpty Dumpty—MISS BETTY JUMEL

The King of Felicia—MR. TERRY-THOMAS

## AT THE PLAY

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* (OLD VIC)—*Humpty-Dumpty* (PALLADIUM)

**M**R. TYRONE GUTHRIE knows all about *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as he proved before the war in a production of mesmeric charm; but so fertile a producer cannot be expected to go back on his tracks, and evidently this time he decided to show us that Athenian fantasy could be approached in a more rational mood. For those who believe that the first purpose of this play is to magic us out of our dull world and suspend our everyday judgments the attempt is not entirely satisfactory. It is clever, but a little too clever. What Mr. GUTHRIE has done is to sacrifice illusion to a heightening of story and a sharper etching of character. The case of *Helena* is most typical. From being merely a maiden standing, dimly but sufficiently, for love forlorn, she is transposed by Miss IRENE WORTH into an extremely positive young woman with a basis of Maugham and a top dressing of the Lyric Revue. As a performance it is first-rate, but it is scarcely calculated to encourage our belief in fairies. In the same way Mr. PAUL ROGERS, though handicapped by a no more than vaguely asinine bit of thatching

instead of the traditional donkey's head, gets more comedy out of *Bottom* than is normally achieved, but gets just a little too much. We are constantly being awakened from our dream, as abruptly as if Mr. GUTHRIE had rung an alarm clock and brought us a cup of tea. Seldom able to resist a rough-house on the stage, he has stepped up the lovers' squabbles and the misadventures of the craftsmen at court until only Nervo is missing.

Mr. CEDRIC THORPE DAVIE's music casts a lesser spell than Mendelssohn's, and Miss TANYA MOISEWITSCH's essay in twisted bamboo and Attic columns sets a cool note. All the same, having accepted the fact that Mr. GUTHRIE was out to vary a conventional theme, there is much to praise in acting which is always closer to the realistic than we should have expected. Mr. ALAN BADEL's *Quince* is delightful, and Miss JANE WENHAM's *Hermia* is a storm-centre to make seismographs rock. Miss JILL BALCON's *Titania* and Mr. KENNETH GRIFFITH's fantastic *Oberon* suggest a snug bungalow somewhere in elfland, but do it effectively. And, thanks to Mr. DOUGLAS WILMER, a skilled hand at the winning oaf,

*Demetrius* is much funnier than usual.

As pantomimes tend to grow more drearily dirty for the supposed benefit of grown-ups, it is worth mentioning that *Humpty Dumpty* gets a clean bill. Its best spectacle is submarine, where Miss GILLIAN LYNNE as *Oceana* leads attractive inter-coral revels. Above water romance is captained dashingly by Miss NOELE GORDON, and *Humpty* himself is played with refreshing comic attack by Miss BETTY JUMEL. But the most successful of the whole cast in capturing the true spirit of pantomime is Mr. NORMAN EVANS, whose north-country Dame embodies all the virtues and all the acids of all the seaside landladies of one's youth. This is rich stuff, verbally perfect. Mr. TERRY-THOMAS is rather wasted as the *King*; until at the end he gives us some of his skilful radio impressions. Other music-hall plums are Messrs. JOHN and RENÉ ARNAUT, the bird-whistlers, whose feathered courtship is memorable, and Mr. BOB HAMMOND and his mathematical paraekets.

## Recommended

Children of ten-plus no less than grown-ups will enjoy Jack Hulbert's adventure in polite crime, *The White Sheep of the Family* (Piccadilly), and Emlyn Williams' brilliant reconstruction of the Dickens readings (Duchess).

ERIC KEOWN



*A Midsummer Night's Dream*  
*Helena*—MISS IRENE WORTH

## ACADEMY PICTURES

THE splendid Winter Exhibition at Burlington House—the "First Hundred Years of the Royal Academy, 1769-1868"—makes one wonder whether there is such a thing as an "Academy picture," as a distinct type or model of what is orthodox and "correct" in art.

Though the first President, Sir Joshua Reynolds, held up the "grand manner" of Raphael and Michelangelo as an example to British artists, few have tried it and fewer still with any great success. Sir Joshua himself did not find it easy to apply his theories to his own painting. He was best when not trying to be grand—in the simplicity and shrewd observation of such an excellent picture as his portrait of Sterne: and there is very little of Raphael or Michelangelo in his popular picture of young Master Crewe in fancy dress.

His Discourses were perfectly sound in exhorting artists to work hard, study nature and frequently refer to great example: but these admirable precepts do not necessarily distinguish an "academic" work from any other. Many great artists (R.A.s among them) have followed all three—and have also been noted for new methods and ideas. A striking thing about the Burlington House exhibition is the number of pictures that in their time marked an innovation in style and aim. The landscapes, for instance. In the eighteenth century there was Richard Wilson, R.A., the first man to paint a broad effect of light on English country. How shocked was his fellow academician, Penny, who led a deputation to Wilson, urging him to mend his ways and be less unusual. Yet it was the beauty of landscape painting to be an adventure in vision. How daring Turner's "Rain, Steam and Speed" must have seemed when it first appeared on the Academy wall—making a picture out of that ugly novelty the locomotive, replacing old, placid recipes by an agitated movement of colour. Equally an innovator, Constable was justly

recognized by the Academy, though his showery skies were so uncomfortably fresh that they made the Keeper of the Academy, Fuseli, wish "that he had brought his umbrella with him."

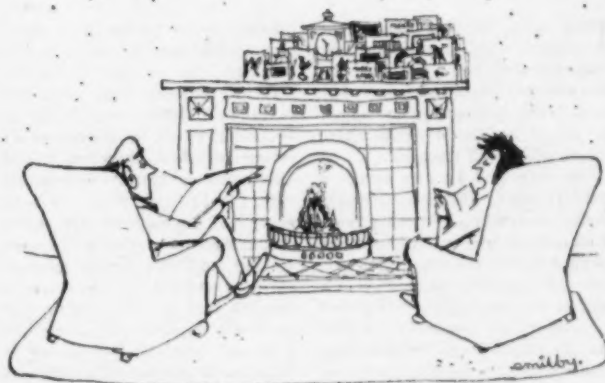
If there were always some classical subjects in the Academy of the past (even the animal painter Stubbs risked a picture of Phaëthon driving the horses of the Sun) there were also romantic subjects. It is notable that the Academy did not close its doors against those who had all the Romantic tendency to break rules.

How, one still wonders with surprise, did the visionary William Blake (with his impartial hatred of Reynolds, Italian masters and the medium of oil painting) ever get in? Yet get in he did, as also (which is hardly less surprising) did his pupil, Samuel Palmer. The Academy allowed scope to the imagination, further witness being Francis Danby's horrific R.A. picture of 1828 "An attempt to illustrate the opening of the sixth seal"—resembling, to modern eyes, an atomic explosion.

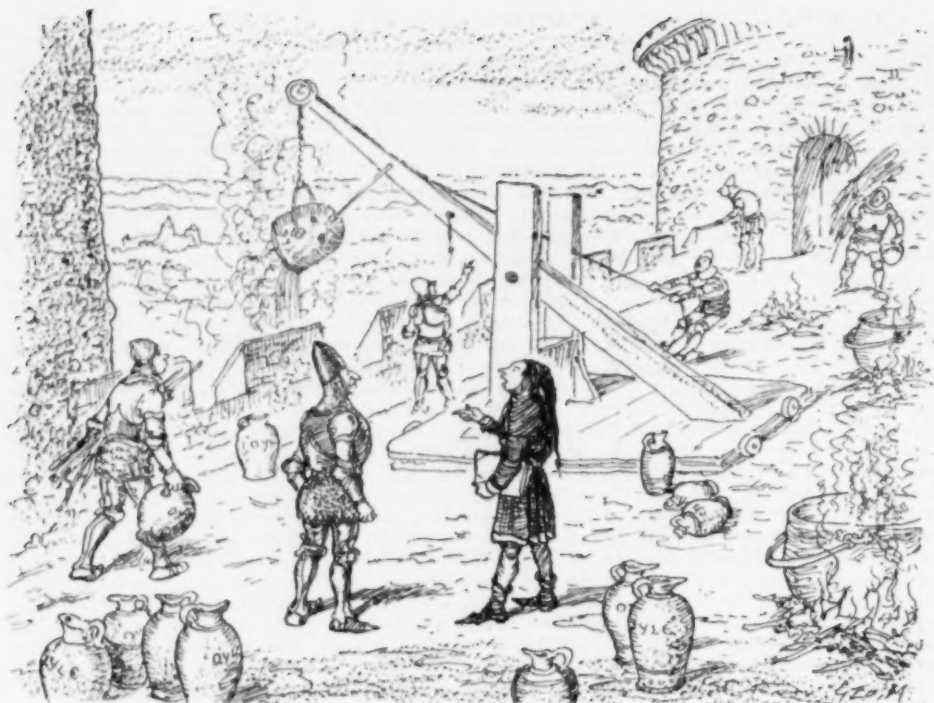
You might have thought in the eighteen-forties that the "Academy picture" was at last stabilized, in the vein of light subject matter (and rather dull brown paint), but not at all. The complexion of the yearly show was decisively altered with the advent of the Pre-Raphaelites. Their new realism (or "truth to Nature") was a *coup d'état*. The young Millais, Holman Hunt, Madox Brown, Arthur Hughes, dominated the Academy of the eighteen-fifties. Something of the dramatic change is still to be felt in the excellent Pre-Raphaelite room at the present exhibition, aglow with its intense colour, in such a triumph as Hunt's "The Hireling Shepherd."

In result you have more than a set of "Academy pictures": a pretty accurate representation of British art in all its variety. Its peaks, as one goes from room to room, successively appear in changing outline, amply making up for some lower level stretches. This Winter Exhibition shows clearly enough how much the Academy has been refreshed in the course of a hundred years by new or personal ways of looking at things.

WILLIAM GAUNT



"Throw a few more on the fire, dear."



*"I've called to verify that your oil is being used for domestic purposes only."*

### THE AXE FALLS ON HAMBLE HOUSE

**T**HE plea for the most rigid economy in expenditure on education made some weeks ago by Miss Florence Horsbrugh has already borne fruit: fruit palatable enough to some, no doubt, but bitter indeed to a small minority.

My wife and I run a compact little Technical Institute—Hamble House—worked up by twenty years of patient toil from a Bunsen burner and a couple of soldering irons to a thriving establishment employing a staff of five, and giving instruction to nearly a hundred students in metal-working, shipbuilding theory, watch repairing and carpentry. Hamble receives a yearly grant from the Government, paid through the intermediary of the town council. I simply write an

informal letter to the town clerk, naming the sum required, and at "Talkers," as we call our Speech Day, a pleasant little ceremony takes place, during which a cheque is handed to me by the Mayor. I return thanks in a short speech, and after cocoa and biscuits we finish up with the Institute Song. I have never had the slightest fear that I should receive less than the required amount, and when I have incurred extra expenditure of some kind—parallel bars for the female carpenters, a shipbuilders' outing, half a dozen new files—whatever it might be, I have paid the bills with a light heart, confident that I should be amply covered by the Government grant.

Those days have gone for ever.

Shortly after noon yesterday I received a visit from the Mayor, accompanied by an Alderman and two town councillors. Plucking uneasily at his chain of office, he asked to see my accounts. I was with the metal-working class at the time, and so great was the noise that at first I was unable to understand what was required. When I did so I must admit that I was both surprised and angered. However, I controlled my irritation as well as I could, shouted stiffly that the books were available for inspection at any time, and led the way to my study.

The first item queried was one of £5 4s. for a year's supply of rubber balls, used by the male students for kicking about during

the eleven o'clock break. "Have I your assurance, Mr. Bunker," asked the Mayor, "that each ball is thoroughly worn out before a new one is issued?"

I was about to return a pretty sharp answer, when one of the town councillors interrupted me with the statement that the saving of the amount expended on all such balls by every Technical Institute in the country would in a certain period—I forget how long—result in a sum sufficient to keep a squadron of jet bombers in the air for a week.

"While young leg muscles grow flaccid from lack of exercise," I commented quietly, as if to myself.

He then had the audacity to ask me to produce the ball at that time in use.

Now, this ball was, in fact, at that very moment lying on the roof, having been kicked there in that day's "elevens" by Piterack, a second-year shipbuilding man. It would have been an act of folly to have admitted this, and in my confusion I said the first thing that came into my head: my wife had taken the ball, I declared, to bounce on her way home to lunch. This led to a ridiculous argument as to whether the Government grant covered recreational facilities for the staff, and I was in the middle of dealing pretty forcibly with an extraordinary suggestion made by the Mayor—that I should give them an assurance "on my honour as a gentleman" that my wife never at any time made use of the female carpenters' vaulting-horse—when Piterack walked in and asked if he might borrow a ladder to retrieve the ball from the roof.

I was disconcerted for a moment, but pulled myself together and gave the lad a pleasant smile. "Certainly, Piterack," I said cheerily. "It's a good thing," I added, giving him a meaning look, "that you didn't kick it up there to-day, or Mrs. Bunker wouldn't have been able to bounce it on her way home to lunch."

His mouth fell open—he is a stupid fellow, and his engine-room designs leave much to be desired—and I was just about to hustle him out of the room on some pretext or other, when by great good fortune

the Alderman noticed a patch on the boy's overalls (second-year men wear them in the Institute colours—yellow and maroon in inch-wide stripes).

"Mending done by Mrs. Bunker, eh?" he said.

"I can assure you, my good sir," I replied sharply, "that after my wife has called the roll, attended to ten o'clock 'milkers,' completed her day's soldering and filing demonstrations and marked her carpentry homework, she is in no state, mental or physical, to throw herself into mending overalls. Repairs are carried out very reasonably by Carker and Pott, an old-established firm with which we have dealt for many years."

It turned out that the cost of a thousand such repairs would be sufficient to buy ten pairs of air-men's trousers and a gross of hand-grenade detonators.

"And half a dozen *kukris* for the Gurkhas as well, no doubt," I flashed. I was about at the end of my tether. However, I might as well have saved my breath, for the fools took me seriously, and the Mayor remarked that he was glad to see that I was coming round to their point of view. "Though I think you'll find that the field kitchens take care of all that," he added, incomprehensibly.

The Mayor now turned once more to the books, and queried an amount of £3 7s. charged for repairs to an old-fashioned chandelier, accidentally broken when my wife and I were being chaired round the building by the students on the occasion of our silver wedding anniversary. I had thought it not unreasonable to enter this under "Sundry Breakages," but it was argued that such damage could not be said to have been done by the students in the ordinary course of their work. I said quickly that I had never claimed this, and one of the councillors then most insolently observed that "our brave lads" would face the Iron Curtain in better heart if they were able to believe that we at home were spending these vital months in some more constructive employment than the smashing of chandeliers. I could not trust myself to reply.

The whole affair has left a very nasty taste in my mouth. The only redeeming feature seems to be that there has so far been no attempt to query our expenditure on metal and timber. If such an attempt should indeed be made I have already decided upon my course of action. I shall march to London at the head of my students and lay the matter before Miss Horsburgh herself.

T. S. WATT



"Pity you couldn't come a week earlier—the water lilies were up to here."



## BOOKING OFFICE

## A Room with a Zoo

**P**EOPLE from abroad tell us we are hopelessly silly about animals, and for proof insist that English writers habitually sentimentalize dogs and cats, endowing them with an abandon of affection that would turn even a spaniel's stomach. Is it any wonder, ask these critical friends, that the French laugh at us? As to that, I have always doubted whether the French are really any less sentimental, and this suspicion is strengthened by finding that Colette, a great lover of animals and a novelist whose accurate dissection of human passion is far from saccharine, allows our dumb chums much the same ridiculous feelings that we possess ourselves.

*Creatures Great and Small* consists of three of her animal books, happily translated by Miss Enid McLeod. The conversations are frankly anthropomorphic. To interpret animals in terms of human thought is nowadays considered a crime by the sterner sort of scientific literary critic; but how else can it be done with any meaning? At best we are only guessing. We shall never know exactly what They think of Us. In these sketches Colette uses animals for subtle reflections of their masters, but they are full of acute observation of the behaviour of different birds and beasts. Everything that walks, wriggles or flies seems sure of her welcome and sympathy: a snow-leopard, snakes, birds, and a Brazilian squirrel have been enrolled on her establishment, and a charming essay on the residents of a Breton rock-pool shows her sensibility to be submarine

as well. The sympathy can be melting, as in the picture of a pathetic little dog touted round by a brutal salesman. Those who would call this simply sentimental must deny tragedy to dogs, which I protest is absurd. But Colette is not taken in by her pets for a moment; their capacity for crime fascinates her. Her dominant theme is the difference between the character of dog and cat, which she analyses brilliantly, without flattery. The pagan independence of the cat, a savage in kid gloves, tuned in to primeval ecstasy, and the anxious loyalty of the dog, a romantic in spite of his sturdy nature, these she observes marvellously; and also the wild lyrical ritual of feline love affairs, product of unplumbable depths of evolution. Among dogs her pet is clearly the French bull-dog, a character not very familiar to English readers. Most of us will be sorry that our particular breed of domestic tyrant has not come under her searching scrutiny.

For personal reasons one of these delightful essays gave me special pleasure. Many years ago I was overwhelmed in a tattered French circus by the performance of a superman who swallowed buckets of water, then engulfed live fish, and later, after an interval during which he distributed coloured charts of his unusual inside, brought up the fish in splendid shape. It was a turn quite unforgettable in all its curious detail. I had never expected to hear of it again, but Colette has had the luck to spend a wet morning in a village café listening to its glories from the superman himself. He must have been the same. In a single country there cannot have been two earning their living in such a fashion, or boasting interior arrangements modelled so closely on the map of the Italian Lakes.

My only excuse for coupling with Colette's book Signor Giuseppe Marotta's witty *Return to Naples* is that he views the teeming life of his beloved city with a compassion and a sturdy realism that are akin to hers. There is no flattery here, either. Now a journalist in Milan, Marotta read gas-meters in Naples after he left school, and gas-men get to know everyone. In a very vivid and racy collection of impressions, "Neapolitan Gold," he gave us his nostalgic memories; in *Return to Naples*, translated into acceptable American by Miss Frances Frenaye, he goes back to see how much the war has left. He finds a black market that permeates everything but is snowy white because so honestly exposed; cigarette mania; an endless traffic in goods filched from the American army; much petty gangsterism, and a desperate lack of money—"Why, in heaven's name, do optimism and confidence go with fur coats and a foggy climate?" On the other hand he finds behind the theatrical sorrows of Naples the old intense family feeling, an unquenchable zest in living, and a legion of hard-working small craftsmen. He writes very graphically. We are made to see and hear and smell the alleys of his city. And the irony of coming on a fun fair at Salerno is not lost on so sensitive a mind.

ERIC KEOWN



### Mahatma Mountbatten

The ethics of the 1947 "scuttle" from India and the propriety of Lord Mountbatten's assuming the Viceroyalty in the rôle of high-speed liquidator are headaches for historians. *Con*—Even supposing Partition to be in itself a good thing, the people were less ready for it than their leaders, as the carnage and refugee horrors abundantly showed. *Pro*—Emergency demanded solution, and we had cut I.C.S. and Police recruitment till, short of (unusable) military force, we were in no position to direct or even bargain. All this emerges from *Mission with Mountbatten*, by his Press Attaché, Mr. Alan Campbell-Johnson, which has the further interest of showing how the mechanics of the "scuttle" actually worked. If the author is necessarily in the position of disciple to teacher who can do no wrong (and sometimes therefore accords less than justice to other personalities) he provides an admirable day-by-day picture of finesse and improvisation, backed by much collateral detail—as, for instance, on the tragic assassination of Gandhi. And whatever view be taken of their politics, his hero—and heroine—were in energy, as he shows, Herculean.

H. D.

### Moral Tale

Mr. L. P. Hartley is a puzzling writer. In his "Eustace and Hilda" trilogy he handled a very original theme with freshness, subtlety and wit: it is a modern classic. Yet his new novel, *My Fellow Devils*, is amateurish and rather silly. The suburban spinster who leaves good works for marriage to a film star and ends in the Catholic Church, after some melodramatic business with burglary and manslaughter, is a waxwork whose refusal to come to life destroys the reality of the moral dilemmas that Mr. Hartley uses her career to discuss. The author is so much bigger than his story that the effect is peculiar; the lack-lustre, unfelt contrivances of the plot sometimes give way to ethical and psychological comments as perfectly phrased and as unexpected as the illuminations that Mr. E. M. Forster shares with his readers. Perhaps the trouble is that a novelist whose strength is in close exploration of a limited field and in compression of writing here talks too long about too much.

R. G. G. F.

### The Last of Lord Houghton

Thanks to his consuming interest in his fellows—and more especially in those whom he considered to have a spark of talent that merited fanning—*Monckton Milnes* would be a godsend to any historian. The final volume of Mr. James Pope-Hennessy's biography, chronicling his hero's middle-aged marriage to Annabel Crewe, his belated peerage and his death in 1885, exhibits even more strikingly than before his biographer's flair for the painstaking discovery and lively assemblage of unique material. Milnes' wife and the father who infuriated him by refusing the coveted peerage are admirably drawn; and "that grove of barren fig-trees

commonly called London Society" is treated with pleasant irreverence. The irresponsible peer's relations with Swinburne—the introduction of a delicate lad of nineteen to Richard Burton and a smuggled library of sadistic books—is handled with antiseptic nonchalance varied by asseverations of "the inborn purity of genius." The biographer seems to have been in doubt whether to rise or sink to the occasion.

H. P. E.

### Words

In a mock-penitential introduction to *I Break My Word*, the latest addition to his well-known series, Mr. Ivor Brown observes that "Dictionaries are unfailing servants of that great human virtue, curiosity." No user of the English tongue with the least curiosity about its origin and history can fail to be entertained, delighted, instructed and moved to indignation by even a serendipitous perusal of this wordy yet compact and agreeably inexpensive work. Entertained by the author's comments on such a word as "comfortably" (a doctor in a particularly revolting murder trial laid it down that "a human body could be cut up comfortably in about an hour"). Instructed and delighted by learning that "Melangell" was the name of a princess who crossed from Ireland to Montgomeryshire and there established a sanctuary for wild life, probably the first of its kind. Moved to indignation by the negligible availability in the noodles of officialdom of that desiderated concomitant of administrative efficiency, a knowledge of how to write plainly. The progeny of this dog-English, whelped in the kennels of Whitehall,



litters in every nook and corner of local government offices; and, like Mr. Punch's A. P. H., Mr. Brown eyes the breed with disfavour and is all for the use of the whip to teach it manners.

R. C. S.

### Witch-hunt

"Nobody can stand investigation," says the hard-boiled business executive. "Nobody. If you think you can you have led your life in deep freeze . . ." Clement Archer, the blameless hero of Mr. Irwin Shaw's new novel, *The Troubled Air*, refuses to heed this advice, allows his prosaic and unremarkable past to be raked over by the political witch-hunters, and succumbs before their slander and intrigue. He is branded as a "fellow traveller" or Red sympathizer, and loses most of his friends and his job as a radio producer. *Finis*. This simple plot, an echo of recent real-life drama in America, is brilliantly handled, and the carefully interwoven tract for our times is as effective as it is necessary. All this *could* happen here. The other Shaw would have approved, one imagines, of this satirical propaganda for liberalism and rationalism, though he would have been sorely disturbed by its heavy emotional undercurrents. A fine novel, full of wisdom and purpose.

A. B. H.

### The Inward Eye and the Outward Eye

Although his jacket rather forbiddingly describes Mr. Richard Church as, *inter alia*, a "country columnist," the preferences of his European mind inspire better essays than the Kentish Weald. Country-dwellers, even contemplatives, have to take the land seriously nowadays—for even contemplatives must be fed; and



"Who was it?"

the essayist's casual dismissal of the farmer who couldn't graze his sheep because the orchard grass was soaked with the poisons he put on his apple trees, is hardly obliterated by his thankful acknowledgment that his own cherry orchard, needing fewer drugs, could pasture lambs. The most English of all his essays is a generous, graceful and alluring tribute to a Somerset worthy and writer, Walter Raymond. But France is even more akin to his spirit than the fruitful loveliness *A Window on a Hill* overlooks. "Fountains of Seaux," which describes the playing, after seven neglectful years, of the *jets d'eau* of Colbert's château, would earn distinction in any anthology.

H. P. E.

### Black or White?

Given the conditions of the country, it was inevitable that South Africa would one day produce its own brand of the literary "Deep South": what has hampered it hitherto has been the absence of an Erskine Caldwell or a Truman Capote. However, in *Mittee* Miss Daphne Rooke shows herself to be a talented newcomer with a true dramatic sense of the squalor, the suppressed violence, and the sultry heat of her country's temperament and passions. *Mittee* is the story of a coloured girl, Selina, who is intelligent, unscrupulous, and feline. She apes the whites who employ her; and as well as her food and board she acquires from them a formidable array of the sins of the flesh. Her world is a world of high drama, mounting tension, greed, and almost limitless rape. Practically nothing is said of the angst, the boredom, and the interior vacuity which go to make up the days of so many "out-spanners." But Miss Rooke has been particularly successful in painting the provincial *bourgeoisie*, the smouldering snobberies, and the crude vitality of the small-town life that she surveys.

R. K.

### Books Reviewed Above

- Creatures Great and Small*. Colette; translated by Enid McLeod. (Secker and Warburg, 12/6)  
*Return to Naples*. Giuseppe Marotta. (Dobson, 10/6)  
*Mission with Mountbatten*. Alan Campbell-Johnson. (Robert Hale, 25/-)  
*My Fellow Devils*. L. P. Hartley. (James Barrie, 12/6)  
*Monckton Milnes: The Flight of Youth*. James Pope-Hennessy. (Constable, 25/-)  
*I Break My Word*. Ivor Brown. (Cape, 7/6)  
*The Troubled Air*. Irwin Shaw. (Cape, 15/-)  
*A Window on a Hill*. Richard Church. (Robert Hale, 15/-)  
*Mittee*. Daphne Rooke. (Gollancz, 10/6)

### Other Recommended Books

*London*. Jacques Bousard. (Nicholas Kaye, 21/-) Still another of the London books. Text of this one essentially informative, aimed at the visitor, but the pictures on nearly every page—magnificent imaginatively-composed photographs, straightforward architectural detail photographs, reproductions of paintings or other treasures on exhibition—should please and interest even those capable of writing a London book themselves.

*Lion in the Cellar*. Pamela Branch. (Robert Hale, 9/6) An exceedingly improbable but most entertaining murder story combining the gruesome and the witty. Not to be taken seriously by any class of reader.

## ALF HERO OF LUGG ALLEY THRILLER

LUNCH-hour sun and a red-and-green-striped ball drew a tidy crowd to Lugg Alley, where United Engineering met City Garage for the tenth time this season. Ned, replacing City's Judder (out with breakdown van), played a prominent part despite the fact that he had to keep one ear cocked for the telephone. Winning the toss Alf put the sun behind his men, and City's goal was in peril from the kick-off, a rasping shot from Charlie in the fourth minute hitting the oil drum after a notable dash led by newcomer Spud in tennis shoes. Right and left full-back Ernie, a glutton for work, twice stopped home rushes up the middle, where it was dry. Pressure eased in the twelfth minute, a horse and cart taking a short cut up the Alley into the High Street. On the resumption Ned slid a lovely ball across to City centre Viv, who was hiding in a doorway. Side-slipping a waiting Chuck, Viv smashed in a fierce drive from eleven yards, which was declared too high—a decision which did not altogether please the visitors. The ball having been thrown back over the wall Viv all but atoned by a masterly display in the larger of the two puddles at the High Street end, which had United full-back Mr. Dunn flummoxed. Badly splashed, Mr. Dunn was assisted off the field to hang up his jacket. United defence stood firm, and in a hair-raising scrimmage in the penalty area Viv mislaid his glasses. In the confusion United piled on the pressure, but some smart work by Ned and Ginger (involving nice cannons off the edge of the pavement) put City's outside-right Mac through with a six-yard shot in the nineteenth minute. Five minutes later Ginger, taking the ball off Mr. Dunn's toes just as the latter was opening his sandwiches, made no mistake from close in, the spectators having to chase the ball all the way round the corner into the Regal car-park, where they practised drop-shots until discovered. Mr. Dunn, now limping slightly, announced half-time.



"... and this is my husband's den."

During the interval hot water for tea was brought by Tich, one of United's promising reserves, from the Elite Snack Bar. Traditional music was provided by Alf on the mouth-organ.

Still two down after the half, United stood up refreshed to face the sun and quickly regained the initiative, their goal having been narrowed by six inches when a spectator accidentally moved a pile of coats. City strove valiantly, but United had an early reward when a corner kick from Stanley (up three steps) skidded in off a piece of coal, City cries of "Obstruction!" being shouted down. Seven and a half minutes later Ned cast a shoe,

leaving Charlie wide open for a lightning raid in which Ginger (now playing goalie and full-backs) was forced to dodge behind a lady with a shopping-bag. Luckily the ball struck the right-hand oil drum, closely followed by Charlie, but three minutes later a rebound from the window of the manager's office opened up yet another United right-wing raid, Alf only narrowly failing to connect with his head from a centre by a little boy who ran away before Mr. Dunn could catch him. A tired City now lacked drive. Following a sortie by Spud, whose Army boots kept the defence at bay, Alf rammed home an equalizer from a penalty taken against Ernie,

who had picked the ball out of a hole to bring it back in play, and Stanley (suddenly darting out of the Elite with his mouth full of cake) stormed in with a header that brought the crowd to its feet in a rush for shelter but was miraculously deflected by Ernie (bending down to fasten a suspender), and sailed harmlessly into the remains

of Mr. Dunn's fruit pie on the touch-line. Charlie earned applause with a sizzling left-foot shot after a daring foray by the United right-wing which was reminiscent of the old Harry-Fred combination of last season, but was given off-side by a man with a rolled umbrella. United hopes of snatching a decider faded when Spud trod on the ball after a

collision with a postman's bicycle in the City goal-mouth. There are hopes of having it stuffed with cotton waste before Friday's replay, but Mr. Dunn will be going home for lunch.

Final score: United 2, City 2.  
Attendance: First half 6, second half 4.

ALEX ATKINSON

## THE MAN WITH THE OILING-CAN

IN ancient Essex once I saw an ancient man,

Most motionless of men

(By Tiptree, Tolleshunt Knights and Tolleshunt D'Arcy ran

The ancient railway then),

And in his wrinkled hand he held an oiling-can.

It was at eventide, before the moon began

Her slow, belated journey over heaven's span;

She did not rise till ten.

Against the whitewashed railings, silently, he leant,

By station-lantern-shine

(By Tiptree, Tolleshunt Knights and Tolleshunt D'Arcy went

The ancient railway line);

His cap was peaked, his blue-clad back was somewhat bent,

And from his amouldering pipe there came a fearful scent,

Like acrid wood-smoke from the watch-fires of Tashkent

Mingled with turpentine.

As I passed by he did not turn his dreaming head,

Neither unbend his back

(To Tiptree, Tolleshunt Knights and Tolleshunt D'Arcy led

The ancient railway track);

Yet since he did not tumble down, he was not dead.

The hour was passing late, he should have been in bed;

He seems to serve no useful purpose here, I said,

And on a night so black.

Beneath his stiff-peaked cap I marked his beady eye,

His overhanging brow

(By Tiptree, Tolleshunt Knights and Tolleshunt D'Arcy ply

New-fangled buses now);

Upon the platform waited seven men, and I,

And this immobile ancient, standing silent by.

The train drew in, its fiery smoke against the sky,

A lantern at its prow.

And still he did not move. And there, for all I know,

That ancient still remains.

(By Tiptree, Tolleshunt Knights and Tolleshunt D'Arcy go

The ghostly railway trains.)

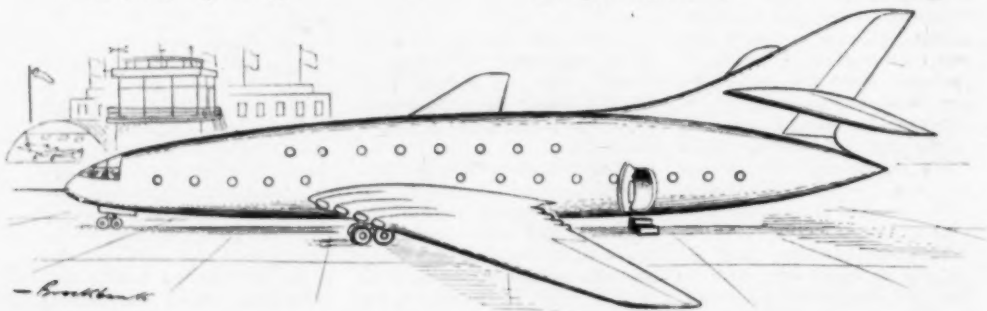
He leans against his fence, his fragrant pipe aglow,

Watching the phantom engines passing to and fro,

And on his cap the seedlings fall, and mosses grow

In the soft Essex rains.

R. P. LISTER



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and breakfast just like a  
restaurant. Uncle John met me at  
the airport and he said how  
funny it was that I was  
in London at night and with him  
in America in the morning. He said  
he is going to fly next time  
and he said it makes home  
seem just like next door

Love and x x x x x  
Jean



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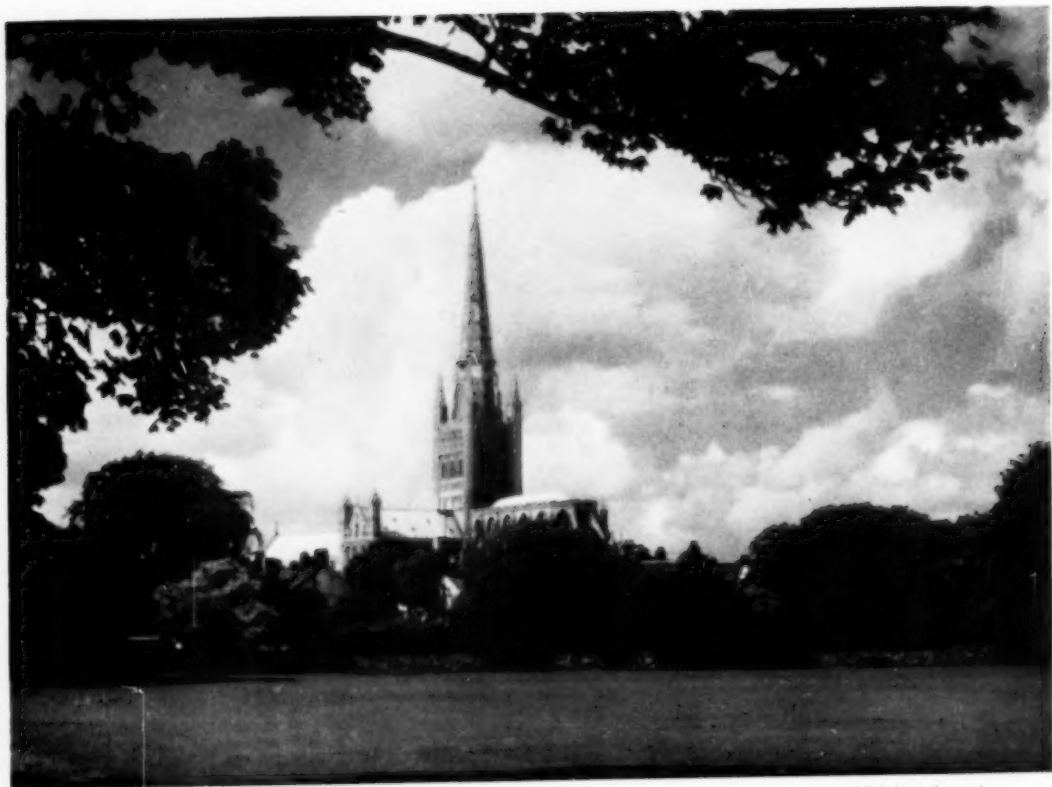
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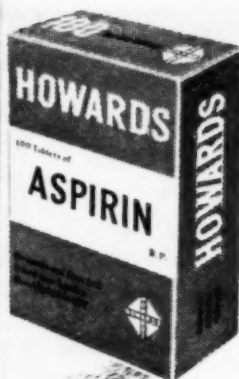
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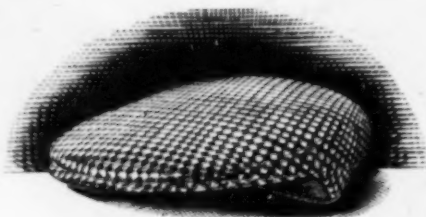
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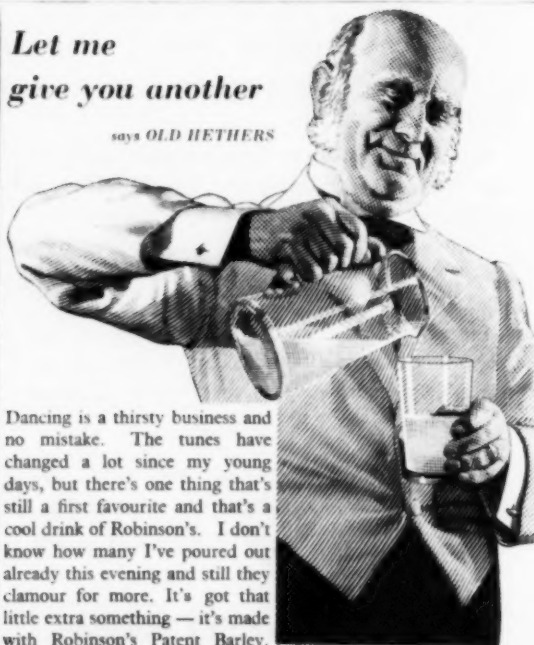
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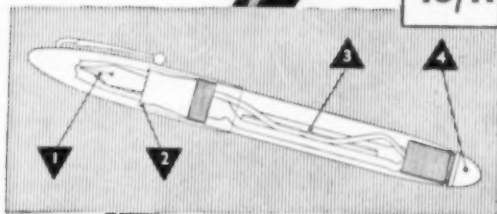
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